

Protocol from the forty-ninth PlantLink steering committee meeting

Date: 26 October 2023, 13:00-16:00

Place: SLU Alnarp, Triticum

Present: Thomas Moritz, Copenhagen University (chairman); Erik Andreasson, SLU; Allan Rasmusson, LU; Abraham Ontiveros Cisneros, LU (PhD students' representative); Sofia Marmon, LU; Mariette Andersson, SLU (deputy director); Olivier Van Aken, LU

Erik Alexandersson, SLU (acting director); Anna Maňourová, SLU (coordinator)

Online: Jean W.H. Yong, SLU; Alf Ceplitis, Lantmännen Lantbruk AB (from 14:00)

Absent with valid impediment: Johanna Osterman, SLU (PhD students' representative); Leif Bülow, LTH (vice-chairman)

1. Opening of the meeting

Thomas Moritz opened the meeting.

2. Election of the person in charge of verifying the minutes

Erik Andreasson agreed to be the verifier of the minutes.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

Thomas Moritz reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting and pre-meeting. The minutes were approved.

4. Information; Erik Alexandersson

Erik Alexandersson presented PlantLink-related news and messages. SASUF Research and Innovation Week will be held 13-17 May 2024 at LU and campus Alnarp with LU, Malmö University and SLU as hosts – we hope for many plant-linked themes; AI seminars in spring 2024 have been discussed with Green Innovation Park in Alnarp; a joint LU-SLU perennial crop network has been inaugurated and the Carl Tesdorpf Foundation application from PlantLink was unsuccessful. PlantLink Industrial Mentorship Program visited research facilities in west Skåne, and PlantLink Day received a record attendance with over 160 registered participants. Overall, PlantLink is becoming more prominent and noticeable at a variety of events.

5. Financial status report; Andreas Gustavsson Fredlund

The SLU and LU sides came to a financial agreement. The costs can now be invoiced without double overhead. The LU financial surplus must be used until the end of 2024. We are currently running on target for 2023.

6. PlantLink as part of SLU Partnerskap Alnarp; Erik Alexandersson

The possibility for PlantLink to join SLU Partnerskap Alnarp as a “subject group” was discussed.

Decision: PlantLink decided to accept a “trial year” option as a “subject group” of SLU Partnerskap Alnarp. However, clear communication about how the trial year will unfold is necessary. What will the structure, requirements, and criteria for evaluation be? LU integration must be addressed as well.

A decision on requirements and evaluation criteria should be made until the next meeting. A document prepared by E. Alexandersson and A. Maňourová in June could serve as a stepping stone.

7. PlantLink’s future organisation structure; Erik Alexandersson

Lund University members did not find a new director for PlantLink. However, Olivier Van Aken, representing LU, is willing to step in as the new Assistant Director.

Decision: Olivier Van Aken was appointed as the new Assistant Director and Erik Alexandersson will remain in the role of Acting Director.

Thomas Moritz has stated his intention to step down as Chairman of PlantLink beginning next year. Until the next meeting, the Steering Committee should identify possible applicants for this position. Thomas Moritz will send out a request to all steering committee members on their interest to remain a representative in PlantLink in 2024.

The conversations with SLU Partnerskap Alnarp may result in changes to the Steering Committee.

8. EPSO and PBN membership; Erik Alexandersson

The department of Plant Breeding at SLU Alnarp is willing to take the costs for EPSO membership and also invite single groups from other SLU departments to join. A decision will be taken within the coming two weeks. PBN is probably changing its geographical scope to all Nordic countries, so a solution for membership has to wait until we know about the future structure of PBN.

9. Application - Formas kommunikation; Erik Alexandersson

Erik Alexandersson informed about the new Formas application “From Plant Blindness to Plant Awareness” developed by PlantLink, Nordgen, LU Botanic Garden, University of Lincoln, Vetenskap Allmänhet, Göteborgs universitet, Linnéuniversitetet and Forskningsnätet Skåne. The goal is to educate secondary school students about plants and plant research to increase the general knowledge of plants and to attract more future plant scientists. The project is loosely based on the previous year's submission.

10. NordPlant status report; Erik Alexandersson

Erik Alexandersson provided NordPlant and NordPlant-UPSCALE updates, including the upcoming last annual meeting in Båstad, a phenotyping workshop in Oslo in March, and new grant preparations.

11. Others

12. Next meeting – 06 December, 13:00, Lund

13. Closure of the meeting

Thomas Moritz closed the meeting.

Signature page

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